

A's News Clips, Wednesday, July 7, 2010

Alex Rodriguez's two home runs power New York Yankees past Oakland A's

By Joe Stiglich_Oakland Tribune

A's right-hander Trevor Cahill will rub elbows next week with Alex Rodriguez at the All-Star game.

But his introduction to the New York Yankees superstar came Tuesday night, and it wasn't a pleasant one.

Rodriguez connected for two mammoth homers off Cahill, one a grand slam, to highlight a 6-1 Yankees victory that delighted the pinstripes-friendly portion of the 20,473 fans in attendance at the Oakland Coliseum.

That put a damper on Cahill's first career start against the Yankees, as well as his first outing since being named to the American League All-Star squad Sunday. Cahill, 22, will be making first All-Star appearance, though he won't be eligible to pitch in Tuesday's showcase if he starts Sunday as expected.

Rodriguez will be playing in his 13th Midsummer Classic.

Cahill (8-3) came in having won seven straight decisions, the longest winning streak for an A's pitcher since Dan Haren's 10-gamer in 2007. But he admitted he was pressing early and trying too hard to justify his All-Star selection, particularly with Yankees skipper Joe Girardi — the American League manager — in the opposing dugout.

"The first inning I was throwing a little bit harder than normal, and I think that fatigued me late in the game," Cahill said.

The A's need to win tonight to avoid a three-game sweep against the defending World Series champs.

Down 5-1 in the fifth, the A's had a chance to get back in it with the bases loaded and two outs. Daric Barton worked the count full against left-hander CC Sabathia but was rung up on a 96 mph fastball that television replays showed might have been low.

Barton slammed his bat down and was immediately tossed by home plate umpire Mike Winters. Barton's taken three called third strikes this series.

"I'm just tired of getting struck out on balls that aren't strikes," Barton said.

Sabathia (11-3), the Vallejo native, struck out 10 in 72/3 innings and won for just the third time in 11 career starts at the Coliseum.

But the story was Rodriguez, who connected for his 596th and 597th career homers.

With the score 1-1 in the third, Cahill plunked Mark Teixeira with an 0-2 pitch that loaded the bases with two outs. Then Cahill misinterpreted catcher Kurt Suzuki's signals on a 3-1 pitch to Rodriguez.

Suzuki wanted a two-seam fastball and Cahill piped a four-seamer.

Rodriguez made him pay, crushing his 21st career slam, which ties him with Manny Ramirez for second all-time behind Lou Gehrig's 23.

"A player of his caliber, he's going to hit that pitch 95 percent of the time," Cahill said.

Rodriguez took Cahill deep again in the sixth, launching a 3-2 pitch over the wall in dead center.

It hasn't helped the A's that the Yankees have clicked in all phases.

Rodriguez made a lunging catch of Rajai Davis' liner in the seventh and doubled Adam Rosales off first. In the ninth, Teixeira made a leaping stab of Jack Cust's liner toward first.

"One through nine, they're all pretty much All-Stars," A's center fielder Coco Crisp said. "Facing a team like that, you've got to go out with your best, and we haven't exactly had it."

Crisp scored the A's only run in the first, coming home on Kevin Kouzmanoff's two-out double. Kouzmanoff had just one RBI in his previous 11 games and snapped an 0-for-30 streak on Monday.

TODAY: Yankees (A.J. Burnett 6-7) at A's (Gio Gonzalez 7-5), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

Oakland Coliseum scenes for "Moneyball" set to begin filming July 26

By Joe Stiglich_Oakland Tribune

Filming is about to begin on the long-awaited "Moneyball" movie, with scenes scheduled to be shot at the Oakland Coliseum.

Production crews will arrive immediately after the A's finish a July 25 game against the Chicago White Sox and leave for a six-game road trip. Filming will begin July 26 and continue through Aug. 6, according to A's vice president of stadium operations David Rinetti.

Production has been long delayed on "Moneyball" — which is based on Michael Lewis' book of the same title that examined the A's 2002 season and the unique approach used by general manager Billy Beane and his staff to build a winning team.

But the film's hype has been years in the making because of its star-studded cast, which includes Brad Pitt playing Beane. Philip Seymour Hoffman is on board to play former A's manager Art Howe, and Jonah Hill will play Paul DePodesta, Beane's former assistant GM.

All three actors are expected to be on location at the Coliseum.

"They're going to be filming basically the baseball scenes," Rinetti said. "They're going to be doing daylight scenes and night-game scenes. A lot of it will be overnight and into the wee hours of the morning."

Registration has been taking place at www.beinamovie.com for fans hoping to be used as extras for crowd shots.

The film appeared in jeopardy as recently as a year ago. But the script has been rewritten, and Bennett Miller has replaced Steven Soderbergh in the director's chair.

Left-hander Brett Anderson, on the disabled list since June 4 with elbow inflammation, came out of Sunday's simulated game feeling good.

That solidifies him for a rehab start Friday for the A's Phoenix-based rookie league team, according to manager Bob Geren. He would pitch again July 14 and continue throwing every fifth day.

Geren is hopeful of Anderson returning to Oakland's rotation between the All-Star break and the end of the month.

Geren made a pitch to New York Yankees manager Joe Girardi to consider relievers Andrew Bailey or Craig Breslow as replacements for Trevor Cahill on the American League's All-Star roster. Girardi will manage the AL squad.

If Cahill starts Sunday as expected, he's ineligible to pitch in Tuesday's All-Star game in Anaheim. Girardi isn't obligated to choose an Athletic as Cahill's replacement.

Dallas Braden gave Alex Rodriguez a poster commemorating his perfect game with a personalized message and a T-shirt that the A's made to remember the pair's dust-up.

Rodriguez said it was a nice gesture by Braden and that "we opened and closed that window."

Braden accused Rodriguez of breaking an unwritten baseball rule in April when the slugger cut across the mound as he returned to first base after a foul ball.

The A's are selling "Get Off My Mound" T-shirts in reference to that game. Rodriguez signed 10 of the shirts, and Braden is also planning to sign them before they are auctioned for charity.

Chin Music: Righty-dominated A's lineup awaits CC Sabathia; Brett Anderson on track for Friday minor league start

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 7/6/2010 6:42PM

Seven right-handed hitters found their way into the A's lineup tonight against Yankees left-hander CC Sabathia. That includes Rajai Davis, who starts in left field and hits ninth. This will only be Davis' third start in the past 10 games, as he's lost time following Coco Crisp's return from the disabled list and the trade for Conor Jackson.

Davis hasn't hit the cover off the ball when he's been in there — he's 1-for-28 over his last 10 games — but I still think it's important to get him in there a little more often. His speed is a good asset at the bottom of the lineup, particularly if a hot-hitting Cliff Pennington hits in front of him in the eighth spot, and Crisp follows him at leadoff. That's a nice speed combo to turn the lineup over. Will Davis see more playing time with Jackson on the DL? "We'll go day to day," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I've been mixing them up. (Gabe) Gross has been playing too. We'll (platoon) left-right. We face another lefty (Saturday). Coco is back in there, and Ryan (Sweeney) is going to play pretty much every day."

Sweeney is not in tonight's lineup, however, as Matt Carson gets the start in right field. Pennington is off too, with Adam Rosales playing shortstop.

—Brett Anderson (left elbow) came out of Sunday's 21-pitch simulated game well, so he's on track to make a minor league start Friday for the A's Phoenix-based rookie league team, according to Geren. If he progresses as planned, Anderson will pitch every fifth day to build up his pitch count. Geren said he's hopeful the lefty returns to Oakland's rotation between the All-Star break and the end of the month.

Here's tonight's lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Ellis 2B, Cust DH, Rosales SS, Carson RF, Davis LF; Cahill RHP.

Yanks — Gardner LF, Jeter SS, Teixeira 1B, Rodriguez 3B, Cano 2B, Swisher DH, Posada C, Granderson CF, Curtis RF; Sabathia LHP.

A-Rod makes Cahill see All-Stars

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Newly minted All-Star Trevor Cahill said he maybe was trying to do a little too much Tuesday night. He was thinking about facing baseball's top team, whose manager had selected him to represent the American League.

"I was telling myself before the game, 'It's the defending champions; (Joe) Girardi is over there,' " Cahill said. "I was a little too amped. I was trying to prove myself, throwing too hard."

That left Cahill vulnerable to another All-Star, Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez, who got him not once but twice in New York's 6-1 victory at the Coliseum. Rodriguez belted a grand slam in the third and a solo shot in the sixth, sending Cahill to his first loss in 10 starts.

Cahill had allowed only two homers over his previous seven appearances, and eight total entering Tuesday; last year, he gave up 27 homers, an Oakland rookie record.

He was more upset with two other batters faced, though. With one out and one on in the third, he walked No. 9 hitter Colin Curtis.

"With a lineup like that, you have to make that guy beat you, and if anything, pitch around A-Rod," Cahill said.

Then, with two on and two outs, Cahill had Teixeira down 0-2 and hit him with a pitch. "That's something that can't happen," Cahill said.

The 3-1 pitch to Rodriguez was supposed to be a two-seam fastball, Cahill said, but he threw a four-seamer "right down the middle. A player of his caliber is going to hit that pitch 95 percent of the time."

Rodriguez is three homers shy of becoming the seventh player in major-league history to hit 600, and his 21 homers are the most ever by an opposing player at the Coliseum.

Oakland first baseman Daric Barton, who was frustrated by the strike zone Monday night and then struck out looking against All-Star CC Sabathia in the first inning, boiled over in the fifth.

With two outs and the bases loaded, Barton disliked a 3-2 strike call by home-plate umpire Mike Winters. As Winters called strike three, Barton whirled and slammed his bat straight down on the plate, and he was ejected in almost the same moment. It was the first time in his career that Barton has been tossed.

"It was definitely outside, like the first at-bat," Barton said. "Bases loaded, two outs, down (four), to give that guy that pitch and it's a ball. ... I know he's a good pitcher, but you've got to throw strikes."

The A's only run came in the first. Coco Crisp singled to left and stole second, and Kevin Kouzmanoff whacked a two-out double down the third-base line.

For the second night in a row, the Yankees played terrific defense, with Rodriguez and Teixeira both making great plays on line drives. Sabathia also started a slick double play in the third.

Grand masters

At the Coliseum on Tuesday night, Alex Rodriguez hit his 21st career grand slam. He's tied for second all time. A look at the top five:

1. **Lou Gehrig** 23
2. **Manny Ramirez** 21
Alex Rodriguez 21
4. **Eddie Murray** 19
5. **Willie McCovey*** 18
Robin Ventura 18

*NL leader

Worst comes to Wuertz, and he responds

[Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Michael Wuertz has regained his 2009 form. After tinkering a bit with his arm slot and his wrist position, what was it that clicked?

Wuertz smiled and pointed at his head.

"After the ball hit off the foul pole, I told myself, 'It's a new season,' " Wuertz said of his mind-set after **Ramon Hernandez's** tie-breaking homer in the 10th inning for Cincinnati on June 21. "It's a matter of confidence."

Wuertz was among the top relievers in baseball last year, but he had struggled to get back to that level this season after some early injuries. In his six outings since the Hernandez homer, though, Wuertz hadn't allowed a run going into Tuesday night. He's starting to get used more, and in more crucial spots as well, such as facing **Alex Rodriguez** and **Robinson Cano** in the eighth inning Monday night.

"That's good, I need to get out there and pitch," Wuertz said.

Wuertz's turnaround isn't going unnoticed. Scouts attending this series say he's expected to be pursued at the trading deadline again this year.

More Braden/A-Rod: **Dallas Braden** sent a perfect-game T-shirt, poster and ball to his partner-in-feud, Rodriguez, on Monday. On Tuesday, A-Rod sent some items to Braden. The two plan to autograph some "Get Off My Mound" shirts and auction them for charity, just as Yankees manager **Joe Girardi** suggested.

On the poster, Braden said he wrote, "Dear Alex, here's the poster you requested. I think you're right, it will look great on your mantel. ... I know you realize it's all in fun."

Braden, who is on the disabled list with elbow tendinitis, played catch Tuesday and said it went great.

Another starter with elbow tendinitis, **Brett Anderson**, has a rehab game in the Arizona League on Friday. He'll use only fastballs and changeups, and he'll add breaking pitches next Wednesday.

He could return to the A's on July 19 or 20, with Braden starting the other day.

A'S LEADING OFF

[Susan Slusser](#), San Francisco Chronicle

Where's Ross? The A's plan to keep using rookie Tyson Ross in relief, but Tuesday's two-scoreless-innings outing was his first appearance in six days; scouts wonder why Oakland doesn't send down the promising starter to get more action.

Drumbeat: Pregame vs. Yankees, lineup and tidbits

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 7/6/2010 6:05PM

Here's today's lineup, it's just a start off for Pennington - Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Suzuki c, Kouzmanoff 3b, Ellis 2b, Cust dh, Rosales ss, Carson rf, Davis lf.

Why is the team's hottest hitter of the lineup, you ask? Well, Coco Crisp was hitting up a storm when he came back and after a day off, went totally cold, so it's a fair question. The simple answer is that manager Bob Geren is packing the lineup with right-handed hitters. Of course...Pennington is a switch hitter - who is batting .217 against left-handed starter. (And I do think that Crisp might have been off that one day for the hammy thing that cropped up the next day, which would make sense.)

Ryan Sweeney will be back in tomorrow. Geren likes to find spots for Sweeney to rest his creaky knees and a left-handed starter does the trick.

It's All-Star vs. All-Star tonight, Trevor Cahill vs. CC Sabathia. Of course, it seems as if nearly everyone on the Yankee roster is an All-Star, something of a contrast with Oakland, which is looking at no active All-Stars at all.

Dallas Braden played catch today - "fastball catch," he said - and he said everything went great. He believes he's in line to return on July 19 or 20, and the other of those two days, it's possible Brett Anderson will be back in the Oakland rotation.

Anderson will pitch in an Arizona League game on Friday, still throwing fastballs and changeups only (he'll add the breaking pitch in a game on July 14). If his July 14 outing, at a high minor-league run, goes well, he could be back with the A's for his next start, or if he needed one more minor-league outing, he'd be looking at July 24 or so in Oakland.

Braden tells me he inscribed a perfect-game poster to Alex Rodriguez, "Dear Alex, here's the poster you requested. I think you're right, it will look great over your mantel. I know you realize it's all in fun."

Homers hand Cahill first loss since May **A-Rod's damage snaps A's righty's win streak at seven**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Alex Rodriguez seemingly knows just how to rile up a crowd, especially those found in Oakland.

And despite recent happenings -- one involving a certain someone's turf -- he doesn't even need to be *on* the mound to do it.

Just let him circle one -- again and again.

That's essentially what A-Rod did Tuesday night, hitting a pair of homers -- one of them a grand slam -- en route to spoiling what was expected to be quite the All-Star showdown.

Rodriguez, though an All-Star himself, didn't realize he wasn't supposed to play a role in said showdown. Rather, all eyes were to be on newly appointed All-Stars CC Sabathia and Trevor Cahill, the latter of whom saw the Yankees' third baseman drive in five runs in the A's 6-1 loss.

Cahill's string of seven consecutive wins -- which had him boasting a 2.12 ERA and .194 opponents' batting average -- subsequently ended. A-Rod's history in Oakland, meanwhile, only grew.

The slugger jolted Cahill for two long balls in back-to-back at-bats, increasing his career homer total at the Coliseum to 21 -- a number that represents the most in history by a visiting player. For Cahill, it automatically attached two homers to the right-hander's name just six days into July. The A's righty gave up the same number of homers in all of June.

However, that was before Yankees manager Joe Girardi personally selected Cahill to join him on the American League staff at the Midsummer Classic, as the skipper did just two days prior.

"I think I tried to tell myself before the game, 'They're the defending champs and Girardi is over there,'" Cahill said. "I think I was a little too amped up. I wanted to prove I belonged on the team, and the first inning, I was throwing a bit harder than normal. I think it just fatigued me toward the end of the game.

After posting two perfect innings -- albeit with a high pitch count -- and gaining a one-run lead thanks to an RBI double from Kevin Kouzmanoff in the first, Cahill loaded the bases in the third with one out for Derek Jeter, who grounded into a fielder's choice while picking up an RBI, bringing Mark Teixeira to the plate with runners on first and third. The Yankees' first baseman quickly reach base once Cahill hit him with a pitch, and Rodriguez entered into defensive mode by launching his 21st career grand slam to left-center field, giving the Yankees a 5-1 lead.

"I got ahead of Teixeira and then just tried to come in on him since I was ahead in the count, thinking maybe he'd chase it," Cahill said. "I didn't want the ball to leak back over the plate. It went too far in and hit him.

"With A-Rod, I threw a four-seamer -- the only one I threw all day. My biggest thing, I didn't want to walk in a run right there. I just tried to throw strikes. I wanted to go after him. I wanted to prove I could get him out, but he beat me there."

Rodriguez went deep again off Cahill in the sixth inning, sending a 3-2 changeup flying over the center-field wall for his 14th homer of the year and the 597th of his career, a solo shot that increased New York's advantage to 6-1.

"They were similar," Rodriguez said of Cahill's pitches on his home runs. "One was a fastball, one was a changeup. Today, they were big for CC."

That proved to be enough for Cahill, who in 2009 surrendered an Oakland rookie-record 27 long balls but entered Tuesday's affair having offered up just eight this season. The A's right-hander left after six innings and 100 pitches, his line including four hits, six earned runs, one walk and four strikeouts.

Cahill's counterpart, meanwhile, compiled more than twice as many strikeouts. Sabathia tallied 10 in his 7 2/3-inning effort, winning his seventh straight start while leading the Yankees to their Major League-best 52nd win.

"CC's a tough pitcher," said Coco Crisp, who went 1-for-2 with two walks against the lefty. "He's one of the best in the game, so against him, you've got to find those big hits, those key hits. When you get a guy on, you have to move him over and get him in -- you can't let those opportunities pass you by.

"We were able to do that in the first and couldn't do it after that. We didn't have back-to-back hits too many times. We had some runners on, but you got to capitalize when you have guys on."

The A's gathered seven hits in the game, but they were 1-for-5 with runners in scoring position and left six on base, including three in the fifth, when Daric Barton was called out on strikes -- and, subsequently, ejected upon pounding his bat to the ground -- to end the inning.

"I'm just tired of getting struck out on pitches that aren't strikes," Barton said.

"I thought it was a good pitch," Sabathia said. "Obviously, he disagreed, but I thought it was a pretty good pitch. He's really patient and makes you throw the ball over the plate."

And while A's manager Bob Geren admitted that Sabathia likely "threw one of his better games," Geren insisted that his own pitcher really wasn't all that bad -- that 95 of the 100 pitches Cahill tossed were "pretty good."

Pretty good, though, just isn't good enough against the Yankees. Just ask Cahill.

"That team definitely sets the bar," Cahill said. "I wish I could've shown more, but it just didn't work out that way."

Barton ejected after called third strike **Inning-ending K comes with bases loaded in bottom of fifth**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's first baseman Daric Barton was ejected from Tuesday's 6-1 loss to the Yankees in the fifth inning after pounding his bat on home plate following a called third strike by home-plate umpire Mike Winters.

Barton, facing a 3-2 count against New York starter CC Sabathia with the bases loaded and two outs, motioned toward first base following a pitch he deemed to be ball four. Winters, however, stopped Barton in his tracks by calling strike three, at which point Barton slammed his bat to the ground.

"I'm just tired of getting struck out on pitches that aren't strikes," said Barton, who believed the pitch was outside.

A's manager Bob Geren rushed onto the field to share a few words with Winters but returned to the dugout shortly thereafter. It marked Barton's first career ejection.

"I thought it was a good pitch," Sabathia said. "Obviously, he disagreed, but I thought it was a pretty good pitch. He's really patient and makes you throw the ball over the plate."

Adam Rosales, who started the game at shortstop, moved to first in Barton's stead, while Cliff Pennington was brought into the game to play shortstop.

Hot-hitting Pennington gets night off **A's fill lineup with right-handed hitters against lefty Sabathia**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- With All-Star southpaw CC Sabathia on the hill for the Yankees on Tuesday night, A's manager Bob Geren filled his lineup with right-handed hitters. Daric Barton and Jack Cust were the only lefty batters in the order.

Though he is a switch-hitter, shortstop Cliff Pennington was notably absent from the lineup, replaced by utility man Adam Rosales. Pennington, who entered Tuesday batting .432 in his past 22 contests, was simply given the night off.

"He's been playing a lot," Geren said before Tuesday's game. "He'll be ready tonight if I need him."

Matt Carson, who was called up from Triple-A Sacramento on Monday, got the start in right field in place of the left-handed-hitting Ryan Sweeney. Carson, who played his initial seven professional seasons with the Yankees, said facing his former franchise didn't add anything special to the occasion.

"Seeing a lot of the same guys is cool, but you just come out and play baseball," Carson said. "You can't think about that stuff too much, because if you do, you'll drive yourself nuts."

Geren also elected to go with right-handed hitter Rajai Davis, starting him in left field over left-handed options like Gabe Gross and Matt Watson.

A's await Anderson, Braden after break

OAKLAND -- For now, it looks like lefties Brett Anderson and Dallas Braden will be rejoining the A's rotation shortly after next week's All-Star break.

Braden, who hasn't pitched since June 22 due to left elbow stiffness, tested out his arm on Tuesday for the first time since throwing a 25-pitch bullpen session on Thursday. Braden played catch before Tuesday's game against the Yankees and didn't report any setbacks, but he didn't throw any pitches off a mound. A's manager Bob Geren said the plan is for Braden to return during the first few games after the break.

Anderson, meanwhile, is scheduled to throw in an Arizona Rookie League game on Friday. Geren said that Anderson's arsenal will still be limited on Friday and that the left-hander will try to throw all of his pitches in the following start.

The 22-year-old Anderson could return as early as July 19, and Geren said that he expects the southpaw to be able to throw 75-85 pitches by the time he returns to Oakland's rotation.

Staying positive a key for Wuertz

OAKLAND -- For A's reliever Michael Wuertz, the 2010 campaign has been unlike any other.

After the season Wuertz had last year, when he posted a career-best 2.63 ERA in 74 appearances, Wuertz signed a two-year, \$5.25 million deal to remain with Oakland. Since then, it's been anything but smooth sailing for the right-hander.

For one, Wuertz missed the first 26 games of the season with right shoulder tendinitis, landing on the 15-day disabled list for the first time in his career. But Wuertz didn't hit rock bottom until June 21, when he gave up a home run to Ramon Hernandez in the 10th inning of a 6-4 Oakland loss to the Cincinnati Reds.

"The next day, I just told myself, 'You know what? It's time to start a new season,'" Wuertz said.

In his 12 appearances before the A's June 21 loss, Wuertz had an 11.25 ERA. Entering Tuesday, he hadn't allowed a run in six outings since, a span of 4 2/3 innings.

"That stretch was tough, but that's the game of baseball," Wuertz said. "Everybody struggles. If you don't struggle in this game and find a way to get out of it, you shouldn't be here."

For Wuertz, the struggles were all mental. He didn't tweak his delivery or make any physical adjustments, but manager Bob Geren said Wuertz's slider is starting to look like its deceptive self again.

"The biggest thing for me was I wasn't having fun because I wasn't having any success," Wuertz said. "But we're winning some games now. We're playing a lot better as a team, and that helps everything out. You've just got to keep fighting and stay positive -- that's the hardest thing."

Worth noting

A's manager Bob Geren said he talked to Yankees skipper Joe Girardi about replacing right-hander Trevor Cahill's All-Star roster spot with A's closer Andrew Bailey or lefty reliever Craig Breslow. "That's something you do -- try to stick up for your guys."

Renewed Burnett can finish sweep of A's

By Didier Morais / MLB.com

The return of Yankees pitching coach Dave Eiland has certainly produced positive results for A.J. Burnett. In his first start since Eiland returned from a month-long leave of absence, the Yankees right-hander drastically improved upon his previous starts, tossing 6 2/3 innings of scoreless ball.

Although the right-hander didn't receive a decision, he said a bullpen session with Eiland was instrumental to his progress against the Blue Jays on Friday.

"I pulled off maybe a handful of balls, but that was it," Burnett said. "I was actually able to feel when I made the corrections. I felt like I was able to make pitches when I needed to. When there were guys in scoring position, I was able to make the pitch."

Gio Gonzalez has been able to make adjustments as well. The Athletics left-hander mirrored Burnett's results in his start against the Indians on Friday, also hurling 6 2/3 scoreless frames.

Unlike Burnett, though, Gonzalez captured the victory to snap a four-game winless streak. In order for Burnett to end a similar streak, the Yankees' offense will need to provide Burnett with sufficient support.

Part of that responsibility will fall on Nick Swisher. Since being selected as a candidate for the American League Final Vote -- through which he has a chance to make the All-Star team -- Swisher has been outspoken about his desire to be honored and could improve his chances with a solid performance in the finale against the A's.

"I see all of these guys going, and I want to go, too," Swisher said. "There'd be nothing more that I'd want to do than represent them in the All-Star Game. I think it'd be amazing. I get excited about it, because I've never had this opportunity before. To be 29 and finally start to think things out, it'd be a blessing."

Yankees: Caution for Rivera

Two days after being named to the AL All-Star team, Yankees closer Mariano Rivera is pulling out. The veteran right-hander said he has been battling tightness in his left side while fighting a right knee injury that he suffered against the Dodgers last month.

"I've been pitching hurt," Rivera said. "I know they are going to use me. I'd prefer to take those days off before the second half. "It's hard -- it's a decision that I have to make for myself and the sake of the team. It's a great honor, but I have to be wise."

Athletics: Carson gets a chance

Matt Carson, who was called up from Triple-A Sacramento on Monday, started in right field in place of the left-handed-hitting Ryan Sweeney to square off against New York, his former organization.

"Seeing a lot of the same guys is cool, but you just come out and play baseball," said Carson, who played seven professional seasons in the Yankees system. "You can't think about that stuff too much, because if you do, you'll drive yourself nuts."

Worth noting

Yankees second baseman Robinson Cano agreed to participate in the 2010 State Farm Home Run Derby, to be held next Monday night. ... The Yankees lead the AL with 24 come-from-behind victories this season and trail only the Reds (26) for the Major League lead. New York led the Majors with 51 come-from-behind wins last year.

A-Rod Takes Over Game Two of the Series

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post, 7/7/2010

Oakland, CA – In his first appearance as an All-Star and the only player selected from the Oakland A's. Trevor Cahill didn't have to prove he was worthy of representing the A's at this year's MLB All-Star game.

Facing the Bronx Bombers for the first time in his career, Cahill lost his command in the third frame. He gave up five runs giving the New York Yankees a 5-1 lead. The bases were loaded twice with both Curtis Granderson and Derek Jeter grounding into a force out advancing them on base. Granderson scored the first run tying the game 1-1.

Then he walked Colin Curtis, Brett Gardner singled and he hit Mark Teixeira with a pitch that automatically advanced him to first. With the bases loaded a second time Alex Rodriguez was next at bat and hit a grand slam (his 21st now tying him with Manny Ramirez).

"It was a game with a couple of mistakes that hurt me," said Cahill. "The one inning was the biggest thing, I kinda put myself in a jam getting ahead of Teixeira." "I threw the wrong pitch to A-Rod and a player of his caliber will hit that pitch 95% of the time."

Rodriguez followed his grand slam with a solo home run in the sixth inning to seal the Yankees victory 6-1 over the A's. It's his 597th career homer, marking his first multi-homer of the season. This is also the second time in a row that Rodriguez has backed CC Sabathia's pitching to give him the win.

Sabathia has been unsuccessful in pitching at home (nearby Vallejo) where he used to attend games as a youth. He has won seven straight games for the second time in his career. Sabathia is the first Yankee pitcher to win seven straight games since Roger Clemens in 2001.

"I think I'm over the whole coming here and trying to do too much," Sabathia said. "I've pitched here a lot in the past 10 years and now it's just another place to come and play."

Oakland gathered seven hits in the game but they were 1-for-5 with runners in scoring position. Six players were left on base including three in the fifth frame when Daric Barton was called out on strikes. Barton strongly disagreed with the call and was immediately ejected after pounding his bat to the ground to end the inning.

"CC's one of the best pitchers in the game," said Coco Crisp. "Against him you've got to find those big hits, those key hits." "When you get a guy on, you have to move him over and get him in otherwise you'll lose those opportunities." "We were able to do that in the first and couldn't do it after that."

Crisp scored the A's only run in the first frame off Kevin Kouzmanoff's double. Going into the final game of the series Oakland will look to avoid a sweep and put the past two losses behind them.

A's slammed by A-Rod

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Alex Rodriguez hit his 21st grand slam and added a solo shot for his 597th home run, helping CC Sabathia win his seventh straight start in the New York Yankees' 6-1 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday night.

Rodriguez connected with the bases loaded in the third inning to tie Manny Ramirez for the second most slams, then went deep again in the sixth off Trevor Cahill (8-3) to lead the Yankees to their fourth straight win.

A-Rod has 21 home runs at the Coliseum, the most by a visiting player.

Sabathia (11-3) got the best of a matchup between All-Star pitchers, getting a rare win the stadium he used to come to as a kid. Sabathia grew up in nearby Vallejo and made frequent trips to the Coliseum to watch the A's and Raiders, but for some reason he always struggled here.

He lost four straight starts and held a 7.12 ERA before winning in Oakland last August.

Sabathia allowed one run and seven hits in 7½ innings to win for the second time in his past three starts here, perhaps finally putting an end to whatever hex the A's had over him. He left after striking out Kurt Suzuki for his season-high 10th K of the game, getting a standing ovation from many of the fans who were left.

Sabathia also became the first Yankee to win seven straight starts since Roger Clemens had an eight-start streak in 2001. He has a 1.88 ERA since June 3, reversing a stretch in which he went five straight starts without a win.

Rodriguez made sure he had an easy time of it this game. Derek Jeter barely beat a relay from second on a potential double-play grounder to drive in New York's first run and extend the third inning. Cahill then hit Mark Teixeira in the back with an 0-2 pitch to load the bases.

Rodriguez connected with a 3-1 pitch for his third slam of the season to make it 5-1. He moved within two of tying Hall of Famer Lou Gehrig for the most ever with 23. Rodriguez's solo homer in the sixth gave him his first multihomer game of the season and 55th of his career.

Cahill, who had won seven straight decisions, had little trouble with the rest of the lineup, allowing only two other hits in six innings of work. The six runs he allowed were his most since giving up eight in his first start of the season April 30 at Toronto.

Sabathia allowed an RBI double to Kevin Kouzmanoff in the first and didn't face any trouble again until the fifth inning, when the A's put runners on first and second with one out.

Teixeira then made a long run to catch a popup by Rajai Davis near the first-base dugout for the second out. Sabathia walked Coco Crisp to load the bases before getting a called third strike on a full count to Daric Barton, who slammed his bat down in disgust and was immediately ejected by plate umpire Mike Winters.

Teixeira took advantage of the vast foul territory at the Coliseum, making a sliding grab against Suzuki leading off the sixth inning. Teixeira then made a leaping grab of a liner by Jack Cust for the second out in the ninth.

Dallas Braden—Oakland's New Bad Boy Pugnacious A's Pitcher Becomes an Icon for Standing Up to A-Rod and Pitching a Perfect Game; Tattoos and a Bottle of Jameson

By [BRIAN COSTA](#), Wall Street Journal, 7/6/2010

STOCKTON, Calif.—The anti-Alex Rodriguez has a bottle of Irish whiskey reserved for him at a bar down the street from where he grew up.

The green bottle of Jameson 18 sits on a shelf at The Matinee, a no-frills bar in a no-frills town about 60 miles east of Oakland. It is there for Dallas Braden.

"He's the only one who drinks that stuff," says Pete Luhn, one of the bar's owners.

Mr. Braden, the Oakland Athletics pitcher who made headlines by feuding with Mr. Rodriguez in April, still blends in easily with his friends here. He still chooses to live in a town that one magazine dubbed America's Most Miserable City.

He is the opposite of Mr. Rodriguez in almost every way, a low-paid player on a low-budget team. Yet he would not tolerate what he perceived as disrespect from Mr. Rodriguez, who infamously stepped on the mound on his way back to first base during an April 22 game at the Oakland Coliseum.

That moment, in which Mr. Braden barked at and later lectured one of the game's biggest stars, has made him the perfect icon for his scrappy team and his scrappy town. More than two months later, it is a moment that still resonates, perhaps even more than Mr. Braden's perfect game on May 9.

Even then, on a day that had nothing to do with the Yankees, the most memorable quote came from Mr. Braden's grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, who said, "Stick it, A-Rod."

Even Monday, with Mr. Braden on the disabled list with a stiff elbow, there were reminders of the confrontation as the Yankees and Athletics began a three-game series in Oakland.

The Athletics were selling T-shirts that read, "Get off my mound." No further explanation was necessary.

Jim Leahey, the Athletics vice president of sales and marketing, said the team ordered the shirts at the request of fans and started selling them two weeks ago. He estimated the Athletics printed about 400 to 500 initially and then re-stocked in anticipation of the Yankees series this week. Not surprisingly, he said the shirt has been "one of our hotter items."

The title of the team's advertising campaign this season is "Green Collar Baseball." It projects an image of a young, hustling and at times unconventional team. Between his local roots, his dust-up with A-Rod and his perfect game, Mr. Braden has become the face of what the Athletics are trying to promote.

The Top 10 thoughts that went through Dallas Braden's mind while he threw his perfect game, as read by Mr. Braden on the May 11 edition of "Late Show With David Letterman":

10. "Grandma's right. Stick it, A-Rod."
9. "I did it! Oh crap, it's only the fourth inning."
8. "Seriously, how cool a name is Dallas Braden?"
7. "Now maybe Justin Bieber will notice me."
6. "I must not tell the world I'm Iron Man."
5. "This is something they can never take away from me. But for \$50,000, you can have my glove."

4. "Next pitch, eyes closed."
3. "Even I've never heard of me."
2. "I should at least give up one hit so I don't have to go on Letterman."
1. "Maybe I can give Kate Hudson a call."

—CBS.com

"He may not be a speck on some superstar's radar, but it doesn't mean he's going to back down from anyone," Mr. Leahey said. "I think a lot of our fans in Oakland and in the East Bay respond to that."

Never mind that Mr. Rodriguez's alleged sin, which Mr. Braden said went against the "unwritten rules" of baseball, seemed hardly worth getting riled up over. Never mind that Mr. Braden, 4-7 with a 3.83 ERA, has gone winless since his perfect game.

The feud was about more than him and Mr. Rodriguez. It was about what each player represents to fans here. Tyler Bleszinski, a fan who oversees the blog AthleticsNation.com, summed it up when he wrote after the incident: "Dallas, I love you. So much more today than yesterday. There is just something beautiful about someone representing your team who has that essence of the city coursing through their veins. Like Rodriguez is perfectly emblematic of New York—vapid, shallow, overrated—Braden is pure Oakland—insecure, proud, and won't take crap from anyone."

That sentiment is even stronger in Stockton, which is to Northern California what the dingy Coliseum is to the American League. The city of around 300,000 people is known primarily for violent crime, high unemployment and frequent foreclosures.

When a television reporter asked Mr. Braden if he planned to settle things "with knuckles" if Mr. Rodriguez stepped on the mound again, Mr. Braden nodded and said, "We don't do much talking in the 209," referring to Stockton's area code.

Judging by the reaction here, you wouldn't think A-Rod stepped on Mr. Braden's mound. You'd think he stepped on his grandma.

But of course, that is preposterous. Grannies in the 209 do not get stepped on. They merely recoil under your foot, lulling you into a false sense of safety before they attack. "She lives in this town, dude," said Mr. Luhn, smoking a cigarette in an alley behind The Matinee. "You have to be pretty hard-nosed to live in this town."

Mr. Braden, who is set to earn \$420,000 this season, could probably afford to live elsewhere. He does not need to commute more than an hour each way, driving through rolling hills and past scattered cows to get to a place other people might be content never to see again.

But he wears his background like a badge of pride. Literally. The numbers 209 are tattooed on his stomach. His warm-up song is "Welcome to Stockton," a rap song from a compilation album called "Thugs on my Payroll." He was awarded the key to the city after his perfect game.

A couple days after his historic performance, Mr. Braden appeared on "The Late Show With David Letterman" and read a list of Top 10 thoughts that went through his mind during the perfect game.

No. 10: "Grandma's right. Stick it, A-Rod."

No. 1: "Maybe I can give Kate Hudson a call."

As Mr. Braden went through the list, a crowd of perhaps 100 people gathered around the televisions at The Matinee, transfixed by what they saw.

"All of a sudden it was like, 'I remember him. I knew him in the first grade. He was hella cool,'" Mr. Luhn said. "And that's the effect it has. People feel proud. And there's not a lot to feel proud about around here."

Dallas Braden denounces T-shirt celebrating A-Rod feud

Steve Borelli, USA Today, 7/6/2010

The Athletics think selling T-shirts playing off A's pitcher Dallas Braden's early-season feud with Alex Rodriguez is a good marketing opportunity. Braden calls it a "suicide request."

The A's, who are near the bottom of the major leagues in the attendance, [have T-shirts on sale](#) that play off Braden's comments to the Yankees third baseman during an April 22 game in Oakland. "Get off my mound," read the shirts.

Braden, who was pitching in the game, was upset when A-Rod crossed the pitcher's mound while returning to first base following a foul ball.

"They're trying to generate revenue, trying to get butts in the seats, I can see that," Braden [told the New York Daily News](#) during this week's Yankees-A's series that marked the Yankees' return to the A's home ballpark. "It's almost like, at what cost do you do that? They didn't have permission. They were told on multiple occasions that, no, it's not a good idea. It's not going to be approved. They just kind of put the horse-blinders on and ran with it."

According to the Daily News, Braden said the A's marketing department went to the Major League Baseball Players Association to get the shirt approved, but was not given permission to license it.

"It's just not cool," Braden said. "It's just a serious, gross lack of tact. At the end of the day, I hope I do not become associated with that kind of approach."

The A's released this statement, cited by the Daily News, in response to Braden's comments:

"We regret that Dallas has expressed concern. The organization created these shirts in response to numerous fan requests and made them to generate interest in this series. The shirts represent the competitive nature of the team, which Dallas epitomizes, and were intended as a fun way to engage the fans. We will speak privately with Dallas about this to clarify our position and make sure we have a clear line of communications going forward."

Home Games: Big League Players Who Still Live With Mother Tyson Ross and Neil Walker Save on Rent; \$400,000 a Year and Free Laundry

By [STU WOO](#), Wall Street Journal, 7/6/2010

OAKLAND, Calif.—Tyson Ross ducked into the dugout for an interview and apologized. The Oakland Athletics pitcher was late, he said, because he had to drop off his brother's lunch at school.

Such is the life of a 23-year-old Major League Baseball player who still lives at home with his mom and dad.

There are perks to that, of course. The Oakland native gets to eat home-cooked meals, sleep in his own bed and hang out with high-school buddies. He also saves on rent, meaning he can devote more of his league-minimum \$400,000 salary to video games.

"This cuts out all the hard stuff, like setting up cable and getting furniture," he says.

Mr. Ross can enjoy the delights of living at home during the season because he is one of the few ballplayers playing for a hometown team. These days, the 30 MLB teams recruit and sign players from all over the world.

League officials say many players head home over the winter, but they believe that only Mr. Ross and Neil Walker, of the Pittsburgh Pirates, return to the nest during the season.

That gives Mr. Ross a unique understanding of what it's like to throw 95-mile-per-hour fastballs in front of 20,000 cheering fans and then go see the movie "Toy Story 3" with his mother, as he did last month.

It also leaves him open to ribbing. Mr. Ross's teammates say they make a point of telling him after games that they are going home—to their own home.

"He's up in that elusive tax bracket, and he's still with mom and dad?" says fellow A's pitcher Dallas Braden, 26, who hails from nearby Stockton, Calif., but has his own house. "I would tell him to utilize these things we call banks. You can get off the nipple any time," says Mr. Braden, who pitched a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays on May 9. Mr. Ross says he doesn't mind the infrequent teasing.

The hometown player was common until 1965, when baseball instituted a draft to let teams pick the best players nationwide, says sports historian Rick Obrand. Before, "most kids grew up liking the Yankees, or whoever it was, so unless they were offered a tremendous amount of money somewhere else, which no one was doing in those days, they signed with their hometown team," he says. Hometown heroes of yore include Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees and Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds.

The historian says "it's great" Mr. Ross lives at home, and it's easy to understand why a fledgling ballplayer would want to.

Unproven youngsters like Mr. Ross, who had a poor earned run average of 5.79 as of Monday, are routinely sent down to the minor leagues for seasoning, so it might not make sense for them invest in real estate. And players move around a lot anyway. Big-league teams play 81 away games, so the athletes are gone for three months a year. It's nice to have a home to go home to.

Then there's the bonus of having a mother who does laundry, says Mr. Walker, the 24-year-old Pittsburgh native whom the Pirates called up to the majors in May. His typical day involves waking up to a bacon, pepper and onion omelet cooked by mom, playing with his Australian Shepherd puppy, Brisby, and then driving off to the stadium to play second base.

Mr. Walker insists he loves life at home. His mother, Carolyn, isn't so sure. "He's really not thrilled about that," she says. "We try to give him his space."

Some young players envy Messrs. Ross and Walker. "It's kind of tough to live by yourself," says 24-year-old Gio Gonzalez, an A's pitcher from Florida who is a close friend of Mr. Ross.

Mr. Ross, who played Little League ball blocks from the A's stadium before starring at the nearby University of California at Berkeley, was drafted into Oakland's minor-league system in 2008. This past spring, he unexpectedly made the A's and had little time to find a place to live. He briefly eyed a suburban condo that was "close to the movie theater and close to Gamestop," the video-game store, but he is happy at home for now.

His mother, Jean, is glad her son is back. Not only do they see movies together, but Mrs. Ross appreciates that Tyson mentors his 17-year-old brother, Joe. One thing she doesn't appreciate: "I still have to clean his bathroom for him."

Mr. Ross's girlfriend, Ashley Hoffman, insists she's fine with the pitcher living at home because she appreciates how comfortable he is there. She says she's comfortable there, too—except when she sleeps over. "His dad's like, 'Good night! See you in the morning!'" says Ms. Hoffman, 23, a recent college graduate who lives with her folks, too. "I still think that's so weird."

On a recent Friday, Mr. Ross woke up in his boyhood room, where posters of athletes Muhammad Ali, Michael Jordan and Sammy Sosa obscure the floral wallpaper.

Home with mom—his dad and brother were traveling that day—Mr. Ross walked his pit bull, Maverick, and hung out with a high-school pal, Rashad Tucker. The two laughed as they watched a movie in which a man in a taco costume hits on two women in a bar.

Around 2 p.m., it was time to head to the office. Mr. Ross hugged his mother and kissed her on the forehead. "You coming to the game?" he asked. "Yes!" she replied.

The A's were playing the Pirates that day, so Messrs. Ross and Walker warmed up by stretching, jogging and playing catch. During the game, Mr. Walker had three hits. Mr. Ross, a relief pitcher, didn't play. He spent the cool summer night on the bullpen bench as his mother and girlfriend cheered on the A's in a 14-4 victory.

After the final pitch, Mr. Ross showered and helped himself to a cup of soft-serve yogurt from the clubhouse kitchen. "You just kind of want to go home, recharge your batteries and come out again tomorrow," he said before he walked out of the stadium.

Boys of summer: Brad Ziegler signs autographs with a favorite Scripture

By Bobby Ross Jr. | The Christian Chronicle

ANAHEIM, Calif. - More than three hours before the start of a Friday night game against the Los Angeles Angels, Oakland A's relief pitcher Brad Ziegler is hard at work.

Make that hard at play.

He's immersed in the arcade version of "RBI Baseball" in the visitors' clubhouse at Angel Stadium.

With a big smile, he apologizes for being late for an interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, but explains that he had to finish

the game with teammate Jerry Blevins.

Two years after pitching a major-league record [39 consecutive scoreless innings](#) to start his career, Ziegler, 30, still can't get enough baseball — real or otherwise.

"Definitely," he says, when asked if he's a baseball fan as well as a player. "I love to watch games. They're on in the locker room all the time."

In fact, there's a game on the television in the weight room where Ziegler is doing the interview. But he turns down the sound so he can focus on discussing his Christian faith.

"I don't want to be kind of overbearing because I've seen how that can turn people off," said Ziegler, a member of the East Grand Church of Christ in Springfield, Mo.

But when he signs autographs — unless it's a team ball and space is an issue — he writes "1 John 5:5" by his name.

"I'll have people ask me, 'Well, what's that mean? What's that say?'" said Ziegler, whose father, Greg, a preacher, and his mother, Lisa, have served the Odessa Church of Christ in Missouri for 26 years. "I say, 'Go look it up.'"

"Hopefully, people will open up the Bible and see something profound that can touch their lives and make them want to dig a little deeper."

That Scripture reads: "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

A few nights earlier, the right-handed submariner — who boasts a career earned-run average of 2.47 in 156 major-league appearances — gave up a rare home run.

The batter: Texas Rangers slugger Josh Hamilton, an evangelical Christian whom Ziegler describes as one of his best friends in baseball. Still, the long ball stung.

In a moment like that, Ziegler said, a Christian shows how he handles adversity.

"I do my best not to show a lot of emotion on the mound, how frustrated I was," Ziegler said. "It bothered me like crazy, 'cause we were up one when he hit it and down one after he hit it."

"And I hate it. I feel like I let the team down. ... And at the same time, the most important thing is, I'm still representing Christ on the field. I try to emulate how he would react in a situation like that," he added, noting that Oakland came back to win that game.

"I'm sure I fall way short most of the time, but at the same time, it's an effort that's ongoing."

Throughout the 162-game season, Ziegler receives support from the East Grand church family — 1,900 miles from Oakland.

"I miss those people," said Ziegler, who has a daughter, Kaylin, almost 3. "It's very encouraging to get text messages and e-mails and Facebook messages all summer long, just knowing that people are thinking about me while I'm away."

In May, Ziegler launched the Pastime for Patriots Foundation, a charity to benefit family members of U.S. military personnel overseas and those who have recently returned from action.

His parents celebrated the charity's launch in Oakland — and ended up watching A's starter Dallas Braden, a frequent "RBI Baseball" competitor of Ziegler's, pitch the 19th perfect game in major-league history that weekend.

Greg Ziegler told MLB.com that he was proud of his son's initiative to buy baseball tickets for military families.

"I'm grateful that he accepts the responsibility to do something good with the way that he is blessed," Greg Ziegler said. "Brad has been given a lot of gifts and great privileges, and he's worked hard. I'm thankful he's interested in giving back and not just accumulating things for himself."

The pitcher said he wants military families to know they are not forgotten.

However, he said he's trying not to take a lot of credit for Pastime for Patriots.

"I've had a whole lot of things falling into place, a whole lot of people helping out that I didn't even know existed when we got this thing started," he said. "I feel like God's at work in a lot of ways, just putting these people in my life."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Donaldson's two homers spark another Cats comeback

Sacramento River Cats

Josh Donaldson was in a 1-for-20 slump when he stepped to the plate in the top of the seventh.

The River Cats catcher had been dropped to eighth in the batting order Tuesday night, and was showing no signs of getting on track with a double play, an inning-ending groundout and a swinging strikeout in his first three at-bats.

But as has been the case with Sacramento against the Reno Aces this season, Donaldson found the right time to come through. The 24-year-old prospect smashed a two-run home run in the seventh to bring Sacramento within a run and another two-run blast in the eighth as Sacramento rallied for a 14-13 road victory.

The River Cats have won their last 11 games against Reno, including seven in a row at Aces Ballpark. Sacramento can collect another four-game sweep in Reno on Wednesday afternoon after coming from behind to win the opening three games of this series. Sacramento overcame a 10-7 deficit through six innings Tuesday, an early 2-0 deficit through three innings Monday and an 8-3 deficit through six innings Sunday.

After staking an early 3-0 lead Tuesday, Sacramento pitcher Kyle Middleton unraveled with control problems in the bottom of the third. The right-hander walked three batters, hit another and had a fifth batter reach base on a Steve Tolleson fielding error. That set up a bases-clearing triple by Ed Rogers -- Reno's first hit of the game -- that gave the Aces a 5-0 lead. Middleton, who had allowed just one run over his previous 30.0 innings entering Tuesday, left after allowing one hit, five walks, two hit batters and five runs (four earned) over 2.1 innings.

Corey Wimberly hit a two-run single and Adam Heether added an RBI single in the fourth inning to put Sacramento ahead 6-5. Reno, however, responded with four runs in the fifth inning, highlighted by a Pedro Ciriaco RBI triple and two-run homer by Doug Deeds, to take a 9-6 lead.

The teams exchanged runs in the sixth before Sacramento began to mount its comeback in the seventh. After Michael Taylor was hit by a pitch -- the fifth hit by pitch of the night -- Donaldson hit his 11th home run of the season to left field. It was the first extra-base hit in seven games for the Sacramento All-Star catcher.

Sacramento reliever Beau Vaughan held Reno scoreless in the seventh inning to keep Sacramento trailing by a run entering the eighth.

Eric Sogard opened the eighth with a single before Chris Carter and Dallas McPherson struck out swinging. Jeff Baisley singled, and Taylor walked to load the bases. Tolleson then roped a bases-clearing triple to center field for a 12-10 lead. Donaldson followed with his 12th home run, a shot to center field.

Vaughan (1-0, 7.04), making his sixth appearance with Sacramento since being called up from Double-A Midland, held Reno scoreless in the eighth to complete his most impressive River Cats performance to date.

Sacramento closer Ross Wolf entered into a non-save situation in the ninth, and allowed the first three batters to reach base -- two by walks. Drew Macias then reached on a Sogard fielding error, scoring Yunesky Sanchez and Ciriaco and allowing Doug Deeds to reach third and Macias second. Wolf, with the winning run on second and one out, then buckled down. The right-hander got Brandon Allen to ground out and Jeff Bailey to pop up to end the game.

Each Sacramento starter collected at least one hit, with Baisley going 3-for-4 in his second game since being called up from Double-A. Sogard also had three hits.

Sacramento, which remains 6.0 games behind Fresno (Tuesday winners over Colorado Springs) in the PCL South Division, has won 10 of 12 games and 17 of 22. The River Cats close their series at Reno on Wednesday before returning to Raley Field on Thursday for a four-game weekend series against the Portland Beavers. Sacramento has won 12 of its last 15 home games.

Cardinals outduel RockHounds on the mound

By Shawn Shroyer, Midland Reporter Telegram

The Midland RockHounds entered Tuesday's series finale with the Springfield Cardinals knowing they would have to piece together their pitching staff for the evening. Cardinals starter Ryan Kulik decided to carry the load for his club.

Kulik went 7 1/3 innings in a 6-2 Cardinals victory at Citibank Ballpark. With that, the Cardinals (4-7) took the three-game series, 2-1, and the RockHounds (5-7) finished their six-game homestand at 3-3.

"You want to win at home," RockHounds manager Darren Bush said. "You can't split at home. You need to win, but that's the way it turned out (this homestand)."

Defense again was a key factor in deciding a winner as two RockHounds errors let in two unearned Cardinals runs while some slick defense by Springfield quelled RockHound rallies.

In the first inning with one on and one out, RockHounds shortstop Josh Horton mishandled a throw to second that ultimately might have started a double play. Instead no outs were recorded and the inning continued. RockHounds starter Jeff Lyman (0-1) added to his troubles with a wild pitch to move both runners up and Andrew Brown brought them both home with a base hit, giving the Cardinals a 2-0 lead after the first.

That was just the beginning of a productive game for Brown, who drove in the first four Cardinals runs in the game. In the sixth inning, he hit a two-run home run to right field off reliever Ryan Edell.

"That was nice to see him coming off the DL swinging the bat so well," Warner said. "He was out for a month, so it's nice to have him back."

But another RockHounds blunder helped the Cardinals in the ninth with the score 4-2 in Springfield's favor.

With runners on first and second with no outs, Pete Kozma hit a grounder to second baseman J.C. Holt. Holt reached out to tag Antonio DeJesus, who was running to second and it appeared DeJesus went out of the baseline to avoid the tag. He was ruled safe, resulting in an argument from Bush that ended with his ejection. Two batters later, Holt misplayed a ground ball that likely would have turned into an inning-ending double play. Instead, two runs scored on the play.

"We were just talking about that (Monday) night," Cardinals manager Pop Warner said of defense in the series. "We gave them a run (Monday) night and they won by one. They gave us four runs tonight and we won by four."

The RockHounds did turn three double plays in the contest, but the Cardinals turned two of their own, didn't have any miscues and received a highlight reel catch from DeJesus in right field.

In the third inning with two outs and runners on third and first, Val Majewski drove a ball to deep right field. DeJesus tracked it all the way to the wall, though, and jumped just in time to haul it in as he made contact with the wall. As long as the ball held up in the air, had it fallen in, two runs would have scored and Majewski might have wound up on third base.

"That was unbelievable," Warner said. "That saved us a couple runs right there. He's done that all year, though. He's saved us runs and saved us games all year."

The RockHounds trailed by two in the seventh and eighth innings and put men on board with less than two outs, but both innings the Cardinals turned double plays.

The solid defense wasn't wasted on Kulik (6-2), who nearly went as deep into the game as the RockHounds' first three pitchers combined. While his strikeout total of three wasn't overwhelming, he worked around the zone with precision to keep the RockHounds on their toes.

"He had good stuff and he's got to be able to pitch to lineups like this," Warner said. "He worked his sinker down and rode up with his fastball when he needed to. He basically just used his four-seam (fastball), sinker and breaking ball. He kept hitters honest by pitching inside and then was able to come back and get outs pitching the outer half."

NOTEBOOK

ROCKHOUNDS BITES: Of the 27 outs recorded during the RockHounds' 3-2 victory on Monday, five were by way of strikeouts and two more were fly ball outs. The other 20 came on the ground as starter Carlos Hernandez, in particular, used his curveball and changeup to induce ground ball outs. He was rewarded with a pair of inning-ending double plays and Justin James escaped the seventh inning thanks to a double play. ... Thursday's probable pitchers, Arkansas' Will Smith and Midland's Matt Wright, both appeared in last week's three-game series, but they didn't oppose each other. Smith started on July 2, going six innings and allowing four runs, three earned, on 12 hits, but he didn't figure in the decision as he left with the score tied before the RockHounds rallied to win. Wright, who was still on a limited pitch count in his return from a layoff due to a hamstring injury, picked up the win in the first game of Saturday's doubleheader. He went five innings, allowing one run on five hits, out-dueling former Major League pitcher Daniel Cabrera. ... Tuesday was Jeff Lyman's first start of the season after making 22 appearances out of the bullpen in the Atlanta Braves system. He allowed two runs, one earned, on two hits and a walk while striking out one. The RockHounds intend to continue using him in the starting rotation, but it will take time to build up his endurance. "He threw the ball pretty good," RockHounds manager Darren Bush said. "He had good life on his pitches. Hopefully we'll extend him out next time."

THURSDAY'S PROBABLE PITCHERS: Arkansas Travelers (5-6) — Will Smith (LHP, 0-0, 4.50); Midland RockHounds (5-7) — Matt Wright (RHP, 1-0, 2.08)

Stockton Falls to Modesto, 6-5

STOCKTON, Calif. - The Stockton Ports (37-46) staged a late rally in the seventh, and then blew the lead in the ninth inning, falling 6-5 to the Modesto Nuts (44-39) on Tuesday night at Banner Island Ballpark. Modesto won the series, and the Ports fell to 6-7 in the second half.

The Ports collected 10 hits in the game, including five straight hits in the seventh. Tyler Ladendorf, Kent Walton and Ramon Soto each had two hits in the game, and David Thomas collected two RBI. Trey Barham picked up the loss for the Ports, his first, and Paul Smyth collected his seventh blown save. Kurt Yacko picked up the win, and Adam Jorgenson had his 18th save on the year on Tuesday.

Ports starter Fabian Williamson kept the Modesto Nuts scoreless in the first two innings before giving up a run in the third. Right fielder David Christensen, Modesto's ninth hitter, walked to lead off the third inning. He advanced to second as center fielder Tim Wheeler was hit by a pitch. Christensen scored on an RBI single by catcher Jordan Pacheco.

The Nuts added another run in the fourth inning. With one out, designated hitter Michael Zuanch walked. Williamson then struck out Radames Nazario, and before walking Christensen again. The Ports then called on right-handed pitcher Kenny Smalley to face left fielder Scott Robinson. Robinson hit an RBI single to drive home Zuanich. Smalley ran into a bit of trouble in the top of the fifth, loading the bases on a fielder's choice and two walks, but he struck out Nazario to get out of the jam.

The Ports made it 2-1 in the bottom of the fifth. Stockton shortstop Ladendorf doubled down the left field line to lead things off. He came around to score on a double to center field by left fielder Walton.

Modesto pulled ahead 3-1 in the top of the sixth. Christensen doubled to left field to lead things off. Robinson hit a sac bunt to advance the runner. Wheeler then reached on a fielder's choice he hit toward shortstop. Ladendorf fielded the ball, throwing it to Ports catcher Soto to help put out Christensen. Soto threw the ball to third baseman Stephen Parker, attempting to get Christensen out in the run down along the third base path. Parker missed the catch, so Christensen scored on the error, and Wheeler made it safely to second. Pacheco then flew out to end the inning.

Modesto took a 4-1 lead in the seventh inning. With two out, third baseman Joe Sanders walked. He stole second while Zuanich was batting. Zuanich slammed a single to right-center field to bring Sanders home.

But the Ports, who had been held to just four hits in the first six innings, brought out the lumber in the seventh. Ladendorf, Johnson and Walton hit back-to-back-to-back singles to load the bases. Soto then singled to bring home Ladendorf for the second Ports run of the game. Thomas stepped up to the plate and doubled to right field to score two more runs and tie the game. Second baseman Brandon Pinckney then hit a sacrifice fly to center field, which brought home Soto, and gave the Ports their first and only lead of the game. The next two Ports batters walked to load the bases with one out. But Jeremy Barfield and Ladendorf both flew out to end the frame.

The Ports then brought in southpaw Barham to face Modesto, and he pitched a 1-2-3 eighth inning to hold the Nuts and maintain the 5-4 Stockton lead.

But Modesto's offense wasn't finished yet. Pacheco and Ben Paulsen hit back-to-back singles to start things off in the top of the ninth. The Ports then brought in closer Smyth. He got shortstop Thomas Field to strike out looking. Modesto then pinch hit Jimmy Cesario for Sanders. Cesario hit into a fielder's choice which put out Paulsen at second. With runners on the corners and two out, Zuanich stepped up to the plate. Zuanich hit the ball to Ladendorf. The ball glanced up off his glove and Pacheco scored from third on Ladendorf's fielding error to tie the game, 5-5. Cesario and Zuanich were safe at the corners.

Ryan Peisel then came into the game to pinch hit for Nazario. With Peisel at the plate, Zuanich made a move to steal second. Smyth threw the ball to second baseman Pinckney, who could have tagged Zuanich out in a run down. But then Cesario made a move to home, and Pinckney threw the ball wildly to Soto to try to prevent Cesario from scoring. Cesario safely stole home, and Zuanich took second base. Zuanich made it to third on a wild pitch by Smyth while Peisel was still batting. Peisel flew out to Walton in left field to end the inning and the Modesto threat.

The Ports headed to the bottom of the ninth looking for a swift rally. Nuts reliever Adam Jorgenson retired the first two batters before giving up a single to Parker. Mike Spina then flew out to left field to end the game.

Stockton will take on rival San Jose at Banner Island Ballpark for the next three games. RHP Shawn Haviland (6-5, 4.15) will start for Stockton, while LHP Eric Surkamp (3-1, 3.49) will take the hill for San Jose in Wednesday's 7:05 PM PST game.

Cougars Rout Beloit, Head to Wrigley

Kane County puts up 4th straight game with 10-plus hits

GENEVA, III. – The Kane County Cougars' offense kept rolling Tuesday afternoon, using another vaunted attack to crush the Beloit Snappers, 11-2, in front of 6,281 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars connected for 17 hits, and six players had multi-hit efforts. Dan Straily logged a quality start on the mound, giving the Cougars a 4-2 mark on their six-game homestand. They now head to Wrigley Field in Chicago to take on the Peoria Chiefs Wednesday night in the third-annual "Road to Wrigley."

The Cougars jumped on Beloit starter B.J. Hermsen for two quick runs in the first inning. Anthony Aliotti and Rashun Dixon had consecutive RBI singles. After Beloit scored in the third and fourth to tie the game against Straily, the Cougars reclaimed control with a pair in the fourth. Conner Crumbliss poked a sacrifice fly, and Aliotti singled in Jason Christian.

The big inning of the game was the Cougars' fifth, as they scored five runs on five doubles. Mike Gilmartin plated Myrio Richard and scored on Jose Crisotomo's double. After Crisotomo scored on a wild pitch, Aliotti cracked a two-run double to make it 9-2. Single runs in the sixth and seventh accounted for the 11-2 final. Straily (6-5) lasted six innings and gave up two runs while fanning nine in the victory, and Josh Lansford and Jose Guzman combined for three scoreless innings.

The Cougars (6-6, 38-43) and Peoria open a three-game series Wednesday night at 7:05 CT with their contest at Wrigley Field. The next two games of the set will be played in Peoria. Ian Krol (6-2, 1.83) will face Rob Whitenack (6-6, 5.95) Wednesday night. The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com with pre-game coverage starting at 6:45 p.m.

Kane County Notebook: A Winning Month

Story URL: <http://athletics.scout.com/2/982362.html>

It took until the third month of the season, but the Kane County Cougars finally hit their stride and put together a winning month. David Malamut wraps up the month of June and reviews the Cougars' week of June 28.

Last week the Kane Cougars went 3-4. They lost two out of three from Clinton. Then they took two out of three from Peoria, and lost to Beloit on Sunday. That put them at 4-6 for the second half. Overall the Cougars were 36-43 as of Sunday night.

Cougars By The Numbers

As of Sunday, [Tyreace House](#) had a streak of reaching base safely in 32 consecutive games. [Rashun Dixon](#) has reached base safely in 27 straight road games dating back to late April.

House is fifth in the league in on base percentage with a .406 mark. [Conner Crumbliss](#) still leads the league in walks with 67. [Max Stassi](#) is third in the league in strikeouts with 91. [Justin Marks](#) is fourth in the league in strikeouts with 87 and is leading the league with 10 losses. [Robert Gilliam](#) is third in the league in innings pitched with 91.1. [Ian Krol](#) is second in the league in fewest walks and hits to innings pitched with 0.92 and is fourth in the league in opponents batting average at .204.

Crumbliss is second in all of minor league baseball in walks, eight behind Kila Ka'iahue. [Anthony Aliotti](#) is tied for eighth in the minors with 55.

June was the first month that the Cougars played better than .500 this year, as they were 12-11. They also hit 23 points higher than in May at .259 and scored 1.3 more runs per game. The weird thing is their ERA was .36 higher than in May.

Week In Review

The week started out well enough in Clinton as the Cougars would win 7-3 against the Lumberkings on Monday. Crumbliss had three hits and scored three times. House reached base three times, with a single and two walks. Aliotti and Dixon both had two hits. [Murphy Smith](#) had another good outing as he went six innings and gave up two runs. His only problems came in the fifth inning in which he gave up both of his runs.

In the second game, the Cougars would get 12 hits but would only score one run. They left 12 men on base, five of those base-runners coming via walks. They would go 1-9 with runners in scoring position. Justin Marks went into the sixth and really didn't do that bad of a job. Yes his line was seven hits and four runs, but three of those runs and four of the hits were in the sixth inning. Through five inning he gave up three hits and one run. [Josh Lansford](#) did not have a good outing, as he lasted two thirds of an inning and gave up two hits and four runs.

The last game of the series would really come down to the Cougars giving up three runs in the sixth inning. They would only get four hits and two runs. Gilliam started and like most of the other starters recently only had one bad inning, the sixth. In that inning he would give up three runs on four hits. Besides that he was good, giving up four hits and one run in five innings.

Next up Peoria would come to town. In the first game the Cougars would lose 4-2. They would score both of their runs in the first three innings and Peoria scored mostly in the last three. [Daniel Straily](#) started and pitched well, going into the seventh giving up four hits and three runs. He walked four though, one intentionally. One of the runs was a Stassi homer in the third, the other a Crumbliss single up the middle in the second to drive in [Leonardo Gil](#).

Krol continued to dominate opponents. He would give up one run on five hits in six innings in the second game of the series. The one run was after an errant pick-off throw and a single to center. [Jose Guzman](#) and [Jose Pina](#) did a nice job in relief. [Michael Gilmartin](#) would homer in the seventh and Aliotti doubled home House and Crumbliss scored on a fielder's choice in the third.

Having to score four runs in the eighth inning to come away with a 9-5 win wasn't easy to watch. The game would be even throughout as the score kept getting tied. Smith started and lasted into the sixth, giving up four earned runs. [Max Peterson](#) did a great job of closing out the game with two perfect innings. House hit his first professional homerun. He also reached base four times with two doubles and a walk. Aliotti also hit a homer and had a single and a walk. In the eighth inning, the Cougars would get four doubles by [Myrio Richard](#), [Kent Walton](#), Gil and House to score three runs. The fourth run came on a squeeze play that Crumbliss would get down the bunt to get House home.

The Cougars continued their homestand and the Beloit Snappers came to town. The Cougars would try again to win the game in the eighth and come up two runs short in a 6-4 loss. Marks started and lasted six. He had one bad inning in which he gave up two runs. Lansford struggled in an inning, giving up four hits and two runs. [Bo Schultz](#) gave up a two-run homer in the eighth. The Cougars scored one in the sixth when Walton doubled home Crumbliss. In the eighth, they would get three more runs. Gilmartin and Gil both drew bases loaded walks. [Jason Christian](#) then hit a sacrifice fly.

Quote from the Bench

"Kane County so far this season so far so good. It's a young ballclub, very talented. It's great to get these guys feet wet in

pro baseball. Ian Krol, Max Stassi, obviously they are young and talented, along with the rest of the crew it's been a good beginning," Billy Owens, Oakland A's Director of Player Personnel, said.

Coming Up

The Cougars continue their series at home against the Beloit Snappers (Minnesota) and the series goes through Tuesday. On Wednesday they play the Peoria Chiefs (Chicago Cubs) at Wrigley Field, and then they go to Peoria for two days to continue the series. The Cougars come home on Saturday for a nine-game homestand, leading it off with three against the Clinton Lumberkings (Seattle).

About the Author

David Malamut has been covering the Cougars since 1998, with his own website, (<http://malamut.net>). He has also written a book about the Cougars, "Baseball In Kane County Cougars" (Arcadia/2005). For daily updates on the Cougars, go to his website (<http://malamut.net>) or follow him on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/davidmalamut>) for in game news and notes.